



## Aggression Replacement Training

A multi-modal intervention for aggressive youth.



## Some Background

- Menzie's Inc. provides out-of-home care for young people in the Southern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne.
- Young people entering the out-of-home care system are presenting with increasingly complex needs and challenging behaviours, particularly males.
- 2002/03 Menzie's literature review of existing evidence-based treatments suitable for working with these young people.
- 2003 two staff travelled to the USA to undertake a train-the-trainer program in ART.



## What is ART?

- A 10-12 week group program (6-12 youth) for aggressive youth, meeting 3 times per week.
- Facilitated by 2 ART co-trainers/coaches.
- ART is multi-modal, that is it has 3 interrelated components-



- 1) Skillstreaming (behavioral)**
- 2) Anger Control Training (emotional)**
- 3) Moral Reasoning (cognitive/values)**



## Skillstreaming (behavioural)

1. Understanding the feelings of others
2. Dealing with someone else's anger
3. Expressing affection
4. Helping others
5. Keeping out of fights
6. Making a complaint
7. Responding to failure
8. Dealing with an accusation
9. Getting ready for a difficult conversation
10. Dealing with group pressure



## Skillstreaming (behavioural)

Keeping out of Fights

- 1) Stop and think what triggered you to want to fight.
- 2) Decide what you want to happen in your future.
- 3) Think about other ways to handle the situation besides fighting.
- 4) Decide on the best way to handle the situation and do it.



## Skillstreaming (behavioural)

1. Define the skill
2. Model the skill
3. Establish trainee skill need
4. Select a role-player
5. Set up the role play
6. Conduct the role play
7. Provide performance feedback
8. Select the next role player
9. Assign skill homework



## Anger Control Training (emotional)

- Anger is a natural human emotion.
- Anger Control Training is designed to serve two related purposes:
  1. Reduce the frequency of anger arousal.
  2. Instruction in self-control techniques for when anger is aroused.
- While Skillstreaming teaches youths what they *should do* in problem situations- Anger Control Training teaches them what they *should not do*.



## Anger Control Chain



## Moral Reasoning (cognitive/values)

- Seeks to establish more mature moral reasoning as a group norm through a positive peer culture.
- Designed to teach perspective taking
- Expose and challenge cognitive distortions-
  - I. Assuming the Worst
  - II. Self-centred Thinking
  - III. Minimising/ Mislabelling
  - IV. Blaming Others



## Moral Reasoning- Group Process

- Depict problem situation with potentially conflicting values
- Promote "perspective taking" through group discussion
- Characters in problem situations demonstrate thinking errors
- Facilitator ask questions that solicit thinking errors from group members so they may be challenged
- Creating moral imbalance for less mature members by establishing moral maturity as the majority view.



## Why ART?

- Demonstrated efficacy in various treatment settings (i.e., residential, community and JJ) with both mandated and voluntary participants.
- Although desirable not essential to have family system involved in treatment.
- Cost-effective (per youth US\$ comparison)
  - ART \$740
  - FFT \$2,280
  - MST \$5,500

